

Appl. No. 09/943,487

Reply to Office action of November 5, 2003

Amendments to the Specification:

Amend the paragraph on page 12, beginning at line 9 to read:

The preferred rotation speed of the buff head 14 with attached buff pad 20 is approximately 350 rpm. The lower platen 16 and attached pad 21 are preferably rotated at approximately 300 rpm. An example of a pad used on the buff station is Politex Supreme Supreme<sup>TM</sup> by Rodell Corporation, with offices in Phoenix, Arizona. These pads are typically comprised of a polyurethane or other suitable material having a volume compressibility of about 20-40 percent. The pressure exerted on the wafer 12 by the buffer system during polishing may be approximately 3 psi. Typical removal rates of the barrier layer 118 on the buff station 10 using the above disclosed process are approximately 1000-3000 angstroms/minute. Because a typical barrier layer 118 is approximately 200-1000 angstroms thick, this step will last for approximately 4 – 60 seconds, depending on the removal rate and the barrier layer 118 thickness.